

Fast Cargo Fleet Slated, Navy Tells Contractors

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The U.S. Navy, plagued by a lack of ships to move cargoes to South Vietnam, yesterday laid before the Nation's top defense contractors a plan to avoid similar shortages in the future.

Rear Adm. Nathan Sonenshein gave more than 800 contractors a Navy outline for new, fast cargo ships that would be floating arsenals ready to sail for any port in the world on a moment's notice with military equipment and supplies.

Sonenshein, head of the fast ship project, said the vessels would be loaded and stationed at various places around the world. They would then be available to back up troops airlifted into trouble spots during emergencies.

Stakes in the competition for design and development contracts for the new ships will be high. A possible total of \$1 billion will go to the winner.

The competitive design

procedure is a new one for the Navy. It is similar to the contracting procedure used by the air force for the development of aircraft such as the C5A troop transport.

In the past, the Navy's Bureau of Ships did the preliminary designs of all Navy ships built by private and public shipyards. Under the new plan, private industry will handle the entire project after getting an idea of what kind of ships the Navy wants.

The new plan caused a controversy within the Navy and reportedly led to the retirements of Rear Adm. W. A. Brockett, chief of the Bureau of Ships and his deputy, Rear Adm. C. M. Curtze.